Buffum's Reminiscences

The Senator's Coat

"Just take Fido for an airing around the square, won't you, Buffum?" called Mrs. Macwilliams's charming voice over the stairs.

I laid the big bundle of my Congressman's mail on the hall stand, though aware that the Honorable Seth was cooling his heels and inflaming his brains for me in the back office, and off I put with the wretched poodle, like myself, on a string.

It was better so. When I accepted office as clerk to a kid Congressman long experience told me what to expect. Things regulate themselves after a while. The newcomers learn to see themselves as others see them.

But the freshness of the Congressional women does not so readily fade. Each one comes to town assured that she has a part, and a large part, too, of her husband's official prerogatives. So, of course, Fido and I proceeded meekly to take the air in McPherson Square.

It was a pretty day, as the Washingtonians say, in the spring of the long session, the air soft and golden and balmy, the giant magnolias bursting into glory like celestial cabbages. I took a seat just this side of the statue and smoked contemplatively.

Over by the Fifteenth street entrance to the park I saw the erect and dapper form of Senator Devius approaching. His gaze was fixed in the direction of our house, on Vermont avenue. Presently he raised his hat, bowing and smiling gallantly. Then he took the red carnation from his buttonhole and pressed it to his lips.

I looked over my shoulder. Mrs. Macwilliams was standing on the veranda, waving a greeting with one hand, while with the other she shook down a shower of wistaria bloom from the vine. Youth and beauty beaming through the purple spray was an alluring sight, but somehow I didn't like it.

As he came swinging along the asphalt walk, a fine and stately presence, with his ambrosial locks tightly curled and the fire of his eyes still unimpaired, I noticed that he was wearing a suit of black serge of the same cut and make as one which Mr. Macwilliams had recently purchased. This similitude brought to my mind the fact that the two men were much alike in height and size; both rather short and compact and both saved by strong personal qualities from insignificance.

Mr. Macwilliams looked up with lacklustre eyes through his spectacles as I entered the office on my return.

"Here already, Buffum?" he said absently. "Don't bother with that mail just now, but make me a copy of this brief I worked out last night on the bill for the relief of the Continental Divide Railway."

Poor man! True to his convictions, single in his devotion to duty, he needed other glasses than those that enabled him to dig and delve through statute and treatise. And so, while he plodded sedately and dogedly up the rocky path of his ideals, his light hearted young wife was frisking through the social garden, delighted with every new prospect and determined that the official rank which gave her such importance should continue and increase.

Mr. Macwilliams hurried away like an errand boy to the departments, and I set about my task. And as I transcribed the notes, so laborious, so exhaustive, my typewriter kept singing, "I can see his finish, I can see his finish," for they presented cogent reasons why the bill in which Senator Devius was so deeply interested should not become law.

And again and again there flashed across my mental vision that eager, inviting face through the wistaria bloom, so innocent, so ignorant. Did it not appeal to me more inspiringly than when it had peered over the stairs an hour before? While not ambitious, I had no intention of becoming tied to a dog.

A week later, Judkins, one of the Capitol policemen, was talking mysteriously to me out of a corner of his mouth.

"How does your old man stand on the Continental Divide?" he asked. "And that's not a bad name for it, either."

"He's agin it," I replied, adopting the vernacular to encourage confidence.

"Then the chariot will roll over him."

"Oh, he's got his wits about him; he can keep on his feet and out of the way."

"Listen," retorted Judkins earnestly, "you know what's what; you can put two and two together. Last night at midnight a cab drove up to the Senate wing. Murdock himself alighted. Devius's messenger, who had been waiting around—that close mouthed, one armed man, you know—snaked him into the committee room in a jiffy."

"Well, what of it?" I ventured, as verdant as a fourth class postmaster.

"Oh, I'm not sayin' a word," he returned. "Only they weren't expoundin' the Constitution for the next two hours. Mebbe I couldn't see their shadows on the curtain from me beat outside, their heads bobbing together and papers pushed back and fort'. Mebbe the Senator didn't file away a long narrow slip they all had signed in his pocket case and then shake hands hearty. Nawthin' to it, of course; but that bill will go t'roo all the samee like the voice of a pedler t'roo a tin horn."

There was more truth than poetry about this information, no doubt, though I was skeptical regarding the shadows, and so I tucked it away in my mind for use when available. But it would not do to have Judkins adopt a similar course; so I yawned and said, "What are you givin' us?" and changed the subject to a kick against the regulations of the police force and the unreasonableness of not allowing the men camp chairs, pipes and novels during the long watches of the night.

The availability of this information became apparent the very next day. I was alone in the office. Mr. Macwilliams had hurried off on his departmental errands like a sublimated messenger boy. The song of the typewriter was stilled.

Doubtless it was thought that I had accompanied my chief—to hold up his hand in his struggles with official Philistines. At all events, from the adjoining library there came distressful sounds—the soft sobbing of a woman, not only not in a temper, but without that hope which is often at the bottom of one.

I coughed once or twice, but the warning was unheeded. Then I opened the door and entered the penitential room.

Mrs. Macwilliams was stretched out on the sofa, as abandoned in her grief as the wrecks and estrays on the shore of time. The contrast between her abjectness and that wistaria hued vivacity which had seemed to fit her as some dainty creature of the golden light was pitiful.

I remembered that I was old enough to be her father, though nobody would suspect it, and I would never tell. I remembered, too, the dog; and began to see, as through a glass darkly, a release from its leash. So I ventured the suggestion that I was somewhat expert in adjusting the silver lining of clouds to a particular emergency.

She sat up, pouting and rubbing her eyes like a child.

"Oh, if you only would, Buffum," she exclaimed. "I would be eternally grateful. You see, I was so anxious that Mr. Macwilliams should succeed—succeed himself, you know. But I had no right to interfere with public matters—I am such a fool——"

"That is more of an official incident than an official disqualification, ma'am."

"Of course, my intentions were the best in the world——"

"Washington is paved with that sort, ma'am."

"But I can't forgive myself for having written that rash letter——"

"That is the lamentation of political Jeremiahs since the world began."

And then gradually I gleaned the wretched story.

To insure her husband's return she had tried to bind Senator Devius to her through innocent coquetries, unmindful that he might have a word to say as to the style of the binding. When through the wiles of which he was past master she had been induced to send him a silly letter, which might he construed as compromising, he began to make himself clear, and then she began to understand—to despair.

A sad story; a shameful story. I had thought myself sympathy proof through long experience with myriad pretence, but as I vowed that this evil one and all his works should be confounded, a wave of honest emotion swept over me, like the memory of childhood.

It was the habit of my Congressman, on the afternoon of this particular day of each week, to wend his way to the discreet and retired barber shop of the Arlingham to have his hair trimmed. At about the hour when I knew that Senator Devius was accustomed to be shaved there I suggested to Mr. Macwilliams that I would accompany him thither; so off we went, he mounted on his hobby of transcontinental railway abuses and oblivious that the pockets of his black serge coat had been stripped as free of their contents as his soul was from guile.

Nothing could be more favorable than the way the preliminaries presented themselves on our arrival. The boy had fled, on craps intent. There were only two barbers in attendance, one already engaged with the Senator's raverential chin. I helped Mr. Macwilliams to remove his coat, and as he seated himself in the other chair I hung it next to the Senator's, and then deftly exchanged their hats on the hooks just above.

"Good evening, Congressman," said the Senator, turning languidly—evening is any old time after breakfast in Washington. "Not afraid of the fate of Samson, hey? That shows the superiority of moral strength. And you, too, Buffum," he continued, in the same tones, half-patronizing, half-insolent, "faithful even unto the strop, I see."

"You might say even unto the lather, sir," I replied, and somehow after that the conversation languished.

I lost no time on our return to the office.

"Have you your telegraph frank book in your pocket?" I asked. "I will leave it to be replenished on my way down."

Mr. Macwilliams thrust his hand into this pocket at that. He drew forth a long, slim pocket case and held it before him like Macbeth's dagger.

"Bless my soul, Buffum!" he cried, bewilderedly. "Where did this come from? It isn't mine."

I looked him over with much care.

"I swear, Congressman," I exclaimed, at length, "if you haven't taken the Senator's coat, and he walked off with yours!"

"What will he think?" lamented the poor man. "I never had such a thing happen to me in all my life."

"He won't have time to think, sir," I returned encouragingly, as I helped him to disrobe. "I'll have this over to him in a jiffy."

"And do be careful, Buffum," he called after me, "that nothing falls from the pockets."

I was so careful that I stopped in the first convenient joint to verify the contents. I looked through the long, slim pocket case, and in the innermost division I found Mrs. Macwilliams's letter, with a red carnation pressed within it—could the Senator be sentimental after all?

I continued my search, and from the compartment on the other side brought out—what do you think? Why, the narrow slip of paper, which Judkins had seen signed and delivered in the committee room, of course. It was a memorandum of what the Senator was about to receive when the bill authorizing the extension of the Continental Divide, with a liberal allotment of public lands, should become law; and I must say there was every reason why he should be duly thankful.

The Senator was standing in his shirtsleeves, in the middle of the floor of his hotel room as I entered, a look of dismay on his august face.

"Ah," he exclaimed with a comprising glance, "I was just wondering what had become of my things. That is all right; they couldn't have been in safer hands than the Congressman's——"

"You forget, sir, that I have also had charge of them," I said quietly; and I sat down.

He gave me another comprising glance; and as he turned toward the window, the long, slim wallet in his hand, his lips were sickly white.

He examined first the division which had contained the letter—I give him credit for that—and then he went deliberately through the book. I could see his face twitching, his hand clutching, his throat gulping; but when he again confronted me he was as rigidly impassive as marble.

"You have got me both ways," he said. "How much do you want?"

"I want you to let both Mrs. and Mr. Macwilliams alone," I replied bluntly.

"Then she does care for that dull dolt, after all?"

"There is no accounting for taste, sir."

"Hum! How did it happen that his pockets were empty?" he asked with sudden suspicion.

"I fixed that, sir. Of course, I recognized that you weren't a dull dolt."

The Senator laughed blithely.

"So it was your bedevilment from A to Izzard," he cried. "Well, there should be no trouble in men of the world like you and me coming to terms, especially in a case of unconditional surrender. When will you be so good as to return the—er—memorandum?"

"On the day after Mr. Macwilliams's re-election."

"And meanwhile?"

"Honor bright, it shall be as safe and secret as if in your own possession, sir."

"I believe you, Buffum," said the Senator gently, and as he opened the door for me he shook my hand.

The next morning, as I mounted the steps of our house with the inevitable bundle of Congressional mail under my arm, Mrs. Macwilliams came out, with Fido on the leash.

"Sha'n't I take the dog for an airing around the square, ma'am?" I asked.

"Oh, dear, no, Mr. Buffum," she replied, her face flushing charmingly, "I couldn't think of such a thing. You are such a busy man; your time is so valuable; I don't know what Seth—I don't know what we would do without you."

YELLOW CUR THAT MADE GOOD.

Remarkable Qualities of a Dog That Nobody Wanted to Own.

"Me for the yellow cur if I ever want a dog to love me," said a Flatbush resident when it came his turn to talk about canine sagacity. "The meanest looking cur I ever saw put in an appearance at my house when we seemed to have everything we wanted.

"The impulse to kick him out would have prevailed unanimously but for the facts that I never kick anything that can't talk and my spouse is a member of the S. P. C. A. This cur ingratiated himself with me the first night of his arrival by getting the best of a cat that had frequently shortened my slumber. By that act the dog got three days grace.

"When the time limit was up he had exhibited several tricks which attracted attention. His affection and watchfulness were of a peculiar brand. He found out the train on which I was due.

"That had always been a puzzle to my wife, but the dog knew. Anything, man or beast, that can peg with any degree of certainty the arrival of a train at any station in Brooklyn has powers of foresight not to be despised. The dog never missed a train on which I arrived.

"Still, I had issued an edict that the dog had to go. Every day, however, he turned a new trick which prolonged his stay. He seemed to realize that he was on probation, and like the Western hero he was doing his damnedest.

"One day he forgot himself and just when we were on the eve of entertaining a guest from Manhattan our dinner was delayed. The fowl was extracted from the oven. It could not be found. Exit also the dog.

"He did not show up for forty-eight hours. He was a dyspeptic when he did. He had gorged himself out of shape.

"I gave the butcher boy $2 to take him away. I did this after I had learned that the boy lived ten miles from my place, and that he wanted a dog.

"Two days later I heard a noise at my front door. It was in the midst of a fierce storm. I went to the door in my pajamas, and there stood the dog. He was a picture of contrition.

"I took him in and showed him down where the furnace was working overtime. The next day he chased a beggar from my lawn, and thereby won a stay.

"The time for a two weeks vacation was at hand, and we closed the house. Before doing so I heard of a man at Bay Ridge who wanted a dog. I boxed the cur and paid a man $2 to cart and deliver him.

"When we returned, the dog met us at the train. I confess that I am a convert to telepathy but I had never connected it with dogs.

"When I got to the house the night watchman told me that the dog had helped him in his business and that he was particularly alert in guarding my house. He assured me that if it had not been for the dog my place would have been ransacked on one occasion when he, the watchman, was sick.

"I would have been worse than a tenement landlord if I had turned away the dog without notice. On the contrary, I respited him for sixty days.

"At the expiration of that time I steeled my heart and paid a man who was highly recommended to remove the dog. I paid $5 for this job, with the understanding that if the dog came back within thirty days the man was to pay a forfeit.

"Exactly thirty days after the dog had been taken away I found him in my back yard, dead as a smelt. There were no marks of exterior violence on his body. I knew enough about dogs, however, to see at a glance that the dog had been poisoned.

"I looked up the man who had taken the dog away. He told me that he had put in twenty-nine days and nights, with an assistant, to prevent the dog from absconding. On the last night the cur showed some evidence of rabies. His keeper then administered poison, hypodermically. Then he turned him out.

"The dog made a bee line for home and died. He seemed to know the conditions of my contract, and did his best to insure the payment of the forfeit by the man who had taken him away.

"However, realizing that the poor cur would cost me no more, I never insisted on the forfeit. The burial cost me another pair of dollars."

Old Bicycle as Inn Sign.

From the London Car.

One of the queerest signs to be found anywhere is that of the Nutley Inn, Sussex, a large house on the Lewes and Eastbourne road.

It consists of an antiquated bicycle of the type affectionately referred to by old time wheelmen as the "good old ordinary," and has swung in the breeze for the last fifteen years.

SURPRISES WILL COME AT DRAW POKER.

The Marked Card, the Bobtailed Flush and the Sealed Envelopes.

"Now, I hold," said the drummer, pushing his chair back from the table and lighting a cigar, "that in poker a man is justified in taking advantage of any fact or incident that is equally open to all the players in the game. If he happens to be more acute and to get more information from a circumstance than the next fellow, then he is just that much better a poker player."

"Well," remarked the army officer, "that's so, I suppose, as long as the chance is even for everybody to see what you do."

"You bet it is," answered the drummer, "and what's more you never can tell when your information bureau is going to get you in one peach of a mess. I remember an affair in the Union Hotel in Atlanta eight years ago, where in one of the decks, a red one, the ace of diamonds had a scratch on one corner made by a finger nail in opening the case.

"I noticed this the first time the cards were dealt, and stored it in my head for future reference. Any one else who had his eyes open could have seen it, so I didn't think it was up to me to put up a squeal for a fresh pack.

"That little game was a lallapaloozer all right. There were two men in it who represented big rival houses. They were both flush, and they kept boosting the limit until it was sky high, and the rest of us were just hanging on by our eyelids, praying for the police or anything else to come along and save our lives.

"I managed to keep my head above water, though, and finally I scooped in a pot that put me some two hundred to the good. I was playing five hundred—all I had—behind my pile.

"Right after that another big jack jumped out on the middle of the table and stayed there, growing fat on sweetening until it seemed as if it never could be opened. The deal went clean around—there were seven of us—and came back to the second man on my right. He handed out the papers.

"I looked at mine—the ten of clubs and four diamonds, headed by the king. The man on my right passed. The man on my left opened it for fifty. Three more stayed, including the chap on my right.

"I was hesitating, when my eye lit on the pack lying in front of the dealer, and, by Jove, that top card was the scratched ace of diamonds. Of course it flashed across me in a second that my play was to lift the pot out of reach of the man between me and that ace and fill my bobtail. So I tooted the bet two hundred and fifty.

"Everybody dropped but the man who had opened. I got my ace O. K. and a swell looking ace-king flush I had. The opener took one card and bet a dollar. I figured that that meant two pairs that hadn't bettered, so I boosted him a hundred.

"I didn't think he'd stand any more. But, sir, hanged if he didn't size up my pile and raise me the whole business!

"I shoved my last white on the table and he threw down a trey full on sixes. I had to quit the game and telegraph for money to pay my hotel bill. About that time, you bet, information on the side was 'way below par with me."

The army officer laughed.

"Served you right," he said, "but you never can tell how Providence is going to monkey with a flush. A funny thing happened to me with one when I was a shave tail.

"In those days the army was a lot different from the way it is now. Gambling was the rule. A man who didn't play was a curiosity, and nearly every youngster on as soon as he joined began spending his pay and learning the game at the feet of the rank and experience that sat about the tables in the club.

"When I went to my regiment I was very conservative by nature, and I played my hands awful close. I never bluffed, and I very seldom squeezed even a sure thing for anything near to what it was worth.

"The other officers joshed me a lot about my 'recklessness' and 'sporting blood,' but I think I was sensible to stick to my policy. I never lost much; though, of course, I never won much either.

"Well, one New Year's night we were sitting in a game, and I was picking my way carefully along as usual, when I got mixed up in a good big jack, with a bob tailed club flush, headed by the ace, king, and queen. Under ordinary conditions I should have surely dropped when they got raising back and forth, as they did, before the draw, but I had a hunch, backed up by a few extra drinks, and I stuck to the bunch like a leech.

"I drew one card and mixed it with my hand. The opener, who had three kings, took two and another man, with aces up, took one. I skinned mine back very closely, saw the top of a new club, and shut my hand.

"The opener bet a hundred dollars. The other man called. I figured correctly on threes for the first and two good pairs for the second.

"The hunch, the drinks, and my ace-king-queen flush were strong on me, and I raised them $200, all the money I had in the world. They looked at me—and dropped. They knew my game too well to come on.

"'What did you have anyway, Kid?' asked the opener, throwing down his three kings.

"'All pink,' I said as evenly as I could, raking in the pot, 'There they are. Pretty, aren't they?' and I tossed out on the table my ace, king, queen and six of clubs and the five of spades.

"I had never filled after all. When I skinned back I saw crooked."

The planter reached for the whiskey bottle.

"I reckon it's up to me," he said. "I'll try to tell you a yarn that has politics pretty much mixed up with Hoyle. My father used to tell it years ago.

"He was travelling to New Orleans on one of those 'before the war' Mississippi River steamboats, when he got mixed up in a game with two old cooks, famous hands at poker and very well-known planters in Louisiana. There was nothing particularly noteworthy about the situation until the night before the boat was due at New Orleans.

"It was then well on toward morning that my father opened a jack on a pair of queens. The first planter boosted him $100. The second saw that and went him $500 better.

"My father dropped. The first planter put up his $500 and drew one card. The second stood pat.

"The first bet five hundred without looking at his draw. The second raised him a thousand.

"The first picked up his cards, examined them carefully, smiled and raised two thousand back—and they kept that up back and forth until they both had every cent they owned in the world, including their plantations, up on that game, yet neither of them had called.

"So as they were both out of money they agreed to seal their hands up in envelopes, leave them with my father and arrange in New Orleans for funds to finish the game on the return trip.

"My father carefully stamped each seal with his own crest and put the envelopes in his pocket. Then the session adjourned for four days.

"The story of the thing ran through New Orleans. Both men were well known, and during the first two days bets were freely given and taken on the success of each. But then a rumor went around that changed public opinion considerably.

"It appeared that the older of the two had given a tip to his brother and several of his close friends on the value of his hand and before noon on the third day they were offering all kinds of money at good odds without finding any takers.

"My father found out afterward that this news was carefully steered to the younger man and that it finally determined him to carry out the dramatic scene that ended the game.

"On the fourth day, before a crowd of excited witnesses, my father and the two players met on the boat. My father handed each man his sealed envelope.

"The older planter opened his carelessly and pushed his brother's check for $10,000 on the table. The younger stood up, holding his packet in his hand.

"'Gentlemen,' he said, 'I am beaten. I know that my opponent's hand is better than mine. To borrow money to bet against him would be simply theft. I have already squandered my family estates and robbed my children of their bread. I have but one reparation to make.'

"And before a man could raise a hand to stop him he whipped out a pistol and shot himself through the heart.

"'My God!' cried the winner, 'and I only had a four card flush.'

"A dozen hands tore open the envelope clenched in the still quivering fingers of the dead and produced—a pair of treys!"

Had Lucky Buckeye Incased in Gold.

From the Kansas City Star.

"I wouldn't sell that thing for $1,000. If I lost it I'd hunt for it like the knights of King Arthur hunted the Holy Grail. That thing exorcised a hoodoo that hung about me for five years. That thing stays with me till I die."

All this, with great conviction, about a little buckeye incased in a small gold cage that hung on the watch fob of Herbert Herring, a New Orleans man.

"Up to September 7, 1900, I had been the victim of bad luck of one sort and another," he said. "That day I was going to Galveston. It was Friday. I recollect that the train was delayed half a dozen times before it reached the city, and I was fuming. We got there at last and just as I was leaving my car I saw this buckeye lying on the opposite seat. I picked it up and put it in my pocket. I had intended going to the Black Hotel that night but after picking up that buckeye I suddenly changed my mind. A good many guests at the Black Hotel perished in the flood next night.

"Later on at New Orleans I was out fishing in a catboat with three other men. A squall struck us. The others, who could swim, were drowned. I can't swim a stroke but I had my buckeye and I was saved. After that I had the thing fixed in this gold case. And that's why I treasure it."

Provisional Name.

From the Seattle Post-Intelligencer.

A girl baby was brought to a Seattle clergyman to be baptized. He asked the name of the baby.

"Dinah M.," the father responded.

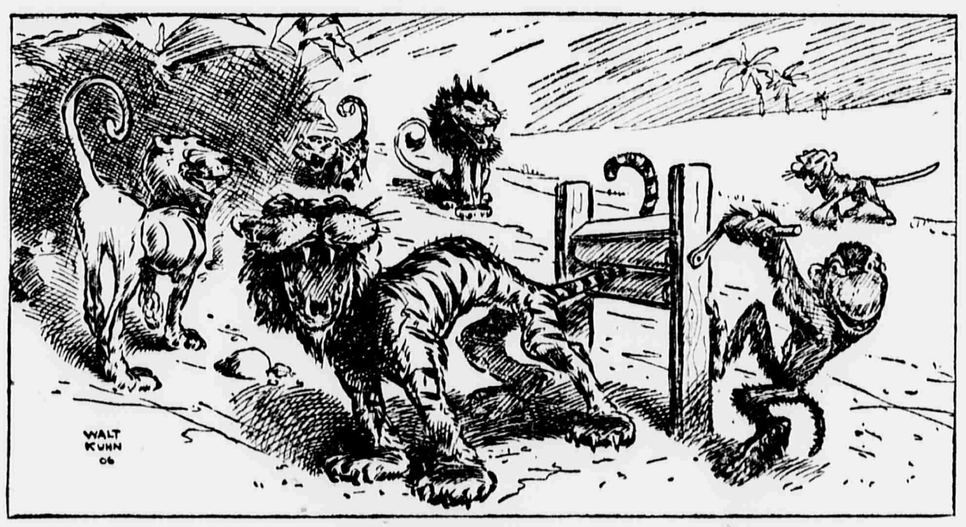
"But what does the M. stand for?" asked the minister.

"Well, I don't know yet. It depends upon how she turns out."

"Why, I do not understand you," said the minister.

"Oh, if she turns out nice and sweet and handy about the house, like her mother, I shall call her Dinah May. But if she has a fiery temper and bombshell disposition like mine, I shall call her Dinah Might."

STERN DECREE OF JUNGLE FASHION.



To get their names on Fashion's roll,
As social lions to reign,
High rollers of the forest must
Submit to caudal pain.

The smart set won't permit a beast
To take the smallest part
In social functions if his tail
Has not enjoyed a smart.

The question, "Is my hat on straight?"
Asked by the human girl,
The jungle dandies render thus:
"Say, is my tail a-curl?"

The tapir and the chamois may
Not swim in Fashion's swirl
With tails not nearly long enough
To take the proper curl.

The jungle may go mad on tails,
Straight, twisted, great or small—
What cares the wise orang-outang
That has no tail at all?

Some time, perhaps, the tiger may
As treasured rug, delight
A fashionable woman who
Will die from lacing tight.

FIXING TIMES OF SEASONS.

Strange Customs Observed by Far Eastern People.

The inhabitants of Borneo make use of the same means for fixing the times of their agricultural seasons as were used by the early Britons and in Egypt between 1000 and 2000 B. C., says the *Journal of the Asiatic Society*. They rely, that is to say, on the time of rising of certain constellations just before the sun—known to astronomers as their heliacal rising. Many ancient temples are found to be oriented to the point of the horizon which marks the heliacal rising of the Pleiades on a May morning.

The natives of Borneo are using the rising of the same constellation as a guide to the proper time to prepare their ground to grow their food supply. When the dry season is perceived to be approaching two men are sent out into the jungle to observe. There they watch, perhaps a few nights, perhaps a month, until the Pleiades are seen on the horizon just before the increasing sunlight causes the stars to fade. Then they return to the village and announce the fact. The inhabitants now know that work on the forest must be commenced. If by any means they have missed the heliacal rising of the Pleiades and have delayed operations till Orion's belt is seen rising just before the sun, they know that they must work double shift. The ground being cleared, they then wait till the Pleiades are at the zenith at sunrise before they set fire to the rubbish.

The above is the method adopted by the Dyaks. Other neighboring tribes, the Kenyahs and Kayans, make use of the length of the shadow cast by a stick at noon to determine their seasons. Situated as they are between the tropics, the shadow is cast on the north or south of the stick according to the time of year. The length of the shadow also varies at the sun passes from Cancer to Capricorn and back. The shadow is measured by means of a notched stick. The notches represent the lengths of shadow which experience has shown to correspond with favorable times for their various agricultural operations.

The Samoans, on the other hand, fix their seasons by the appearance of a curious marine worm, which they call the palolo. The vai-palolo, or time of the palolo, is the name of one of their seasons, as spring is one of ours. This strange worm lives in the interstices of the coral reefs, and at certain seasons makes its appearance in the open sea in immense numbers. It is eagerly gathered and eaten by the natives.

If the swarm appears, say, at 3 o'clock in the morning it has totally disappeared by 9 o'clock. Both male and female worms break up into innumerable fragments, and the eggs are fertilized in the water. The coming of the palolo is regulated by the moon, and yet, strange to say, in the long run it keeps solar time. If the dates of its appearances were separated by twelve lunar months, then, reckoning by the day of the month, it would be eleven days earlier each year. On the other hand, if it came every thirteen months it would be eighteen days later each year. This is rectified by having in every cycle of three years one interval of thirteen and two of twelve months. Finally, by the addition of an extra interval of thirteen months in a cycle of twenty-nine years the error is less than one day in a century.

TEACHING SPARROW TO SING.

Raised With Canaries, He Soon Learned to Imitate Them.

From the American Journal of Psychology.

A series of interesting experiments in which English sparrows have been taught to sing sweetly is recorded by Dr. Conradi. The aim of the experimenter has been to determine what are the conditions under which birds learn and cling to their traditional notes. For this purpose he has taken very young birds of non-musical species and kept them entirely with songsters, to determine whether they would thus acquire the musical notes.

In July, 1893, he put four fledgling English sparrows into the nest of a pair of singing canaries. Three of them died, but the fourth survived. This one had already acquired a sparrow chirp; but, hearing thenceforth only the notes of the canary, he went no further with the language which was his birthright. Instead, he came gradually, when among the canaries, to give notes different from sparrow talk. Even when he was silent, if the canaries were singing he could be seen moving his throat, as if he were trying to form the sounds, much as a person often naudibly follows a song which another is singing. At last these sounds began to be audible, and increasingly so. He began to give notes in rapid succession, three or four tones up the scale, and then repeating the top note five or six times.

Growing bolder with practice and the sound of his own voice, he soon indulged three or four runs in succession, with eight to twelve notes in each; and in the last days of September, when three months old, he went up and down and up the scale, all in one run.

All this while his voice had been changing. At first it was harsh, as is natural with English sparrows, but gradually, with the effort or with the subconscious influence of the sweeter sounds about him, it became softer and acquired something of the canary quality.

At first he sang on a low scale and tried the top notes vainly; but, as his voice became milder, he went higher more easily. He was three months old when, growing bold, he essayed his first trill. It was short but musical, and he evidently liked it, for he repeated it, and continued steadily to practise it. It was done modestly, and after each trill he sat still and appeared to be listening. A year later, however, when the report was being written by the experimenter, he had grown to be quite an adept in canary song, and would trill and sing continually, punctuating his song with complete circles and semicircles on his perch.

To try the effect of association upon him, Dr. Conradi removed him for a time, in his first year, from the canaries, and put him where he heard only sparrow chatter. Gradually he ceased to sing and began to return to the neglected sparrow tongue; but when he was again hung with the canaries he regained all he had lost in less than a month.